

The Library Assistant:

The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.

No. 70.

OCTOBER, 1903.

Published Monthly

INAUGURAL MEETING—NINTH SESSION.

The inaugural meeting of the L.A.A. will be held at Stepney on **Wednesday, October 7th**, and the following arrangements have been made, thanks to Mr. Cawthorne's endeavours.

Members and friends are requested to assemble outside Mark Lane Station (District Railway) at 3.0 p.m. promptly. From thence the party will proceed to view the Tower, under the direction of a Special Warder, by permission of Lieut.-Gen. G. B. Milman, K.C.B., Major of His Majesty's Tower of London.

Following this the party will proceed to Toynbee Hall, the pioneer of University settlements, where they will be received at 5.0 p.m. by the Warden, the Rev. Canon Barnett and Mrs. Barnett. Tea will be provided here, at the conclusion of which arrangements have been made for an inspection of the Settlement.

If time permits, visits will be made to the Shipping Exhibition at Whitechapel Art Gallery, and the Borough Museum, which is the only municipal institution of its kind in the County of London. Miss Hall, the Curator, will be pleased to meet parties and explain its aims. The proposed visit to the Royal Mint has had to be foregone, owing to the inconvenient time of permissions to inspect.

The meeting proper will be held at the St. George Library, 236 Cable Street, E., and proceedings will commence at 8.0 p.m. The chair will be taken by Councillor F. C. Mills, M.A., J.P., M.A.B., Chairman of the Stepney Public Libraries Committee, and Mr. Cawthorne, the Borough Librarian, will deliver an address dealing with "Municipal Libraries in the light of recent criticism."

It is hoped that members and friends will show their appreciation of this excellent programme by attending in good strength. The members who cannot avail themselves of the early stages of the programme should not fail to present themselves at the meeting proper.

NOTE.—At this meeting the results of the "Cotgrave" (1903) Prize Essay Scheme will be announced, and the four vacancies upon the Committee consequent upon the retirement of Messrs. Burt, Lewin, P. H. Wood and R. B. Wood, will be filled by ballot. All nominations for these vacancies must reach the Hon. Sec. by last post on October 6th.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MINUTES.

A meeting of the Committee was held on September 16th, at which were present, Messrs. Rees (in chair), Bullen, Harris, Hatcher, Roebuck, Savage and Thorne.

It was resolved that an abstract of the more important proceedings of each Committee Meeting should be printed in the Journal.

On the recommendation of the Education Committee, it was agreed to establish "evercirculators" for the interchanging of ideas on professional matters among senior assistants. Further particulars will be found on another page.

The Branches Committee have under consideration the establishment of Branches in the Leeds and Bristol Districts.

The Entertainment Committee are arranging for the Annual Dinner, which will be held on November 18th at Anderton's Hotel. Offers of musical help or suggestions should be sent to Mr. Roebuck.

The resignations of Messrs. P. E. Lewin and P. H. Wood were accepted with regret.

A motion by Mr. Savage, "That the 'Library Assistant' be not published during the months of August and September," was defeated, the voting being one for and six against.

NORTH-WESTERN BRANCH.

SESSION 1903-4.

The first meeting of the Session will be held in the Central Library, Oldham, on Tuesday evening, October 19th, at 7.30 prompt, when Mr. W. H. Berry will read a paper, "A Note on the Oldham Free Library and its Delivery Stations." The paper will be illustrated by the various forms, books, etc., used in the working of the Branches.

TRAINS OUT.		RETURN.	
Manchester (Vict.), dep.	6.27, 6.50, 7.15	Central, dep....	9.37, 10.12
Oldham (Central), arr.	6.53, 7.15, 7.39	Vict., arr.	10.8, 10.34

Electric Cars (from Piccadilly to Hollinwood, and then by Moorside Car) pass the Library, fares, 5d. each way.

NEW MEMBERS.

Senior :—

CLARKE, J. E., Wallasey Public Libraries.

SEED, W. H., Seacombe Branch, Wallasey Public Libraries.

Junior :—

BURGESS, W., Marsh Lane Branch, Bootle Public Libraries;

CHAMBERS, H., West Ham Public Libraries; COX, H. J., Portsmouth Public Library; COX, S., Christ Church Public Library, S.E.; HATCHER, A. F., West Ham Public Libraries; TERRY, H., Passmore Edwards Library, Borough Road, S.E.; WILLIAMS, R. G., Wallasey Public Libraries.

A METHOD OF REGISTERING "BESPOKEN BOOKS."

By SYDNEY LAMB, of the St. Helens Public Libraries.

It having occurred to me during my visits to various libraries that the method of registering books bespoken by borrowers is sometimes unreliable and at any rate old-fashioned, I beg to submit a system which has been found to work satisfactorily for some time past in the St. Helens Public Library.

It will first of all be necessary for me to give a brief description, and to point out some of the disadvantages of the system formerly used at St. Helens, and which is, I believe, still the method employed in many libraries. It consists in simply entering in a folio or quarto book the date of application, borrower's name and address, and the title of book bespoken in one heterogeneous mass, without the slightest attempt to keep all the entries for a specific book together, and it is in this that it is somewhat akin to the old ledger method of recording books issued. The disadvantages of this system are obvious, but first in importance must come the large amount of time employed in searching for the name of the next applicant, who is entitled to a certain book, and this is especially marked when there is a run on a particular book, as, for instance, Marie Corelli's "Temporal Power," for which there may be as many as 20 or 30 entries, covering a period of something like five or six months, or even longer. This necessitates turning back and scanning every page until the next entry is discovered. As will be seen, very much time is wasted over this operation. Another disadvantage is the liability to mistakes which this system lays itself open to, as in searching for the next entry, there is a probability of one being overlooked. This leads to charges of favouritism by those borrowers whose names have been so overlooked, and who have heard "that a friend of theirs, who entered their name a week or so after them, has actually got the book before them!" Any system that leads the public to think that favouritism in any shape or form is shown should be discarded.

The system which I wish to explain and recommend is simple, quick and accurate. It consists of a number of cards, 8½-ins. long, by 5½-ins. broad (of course, the size may be varied

to suit individual tastes and requirements, but in practice this size has been found both convenient and handy), printed and ruled on both sides. The title and number of the book are written on the top, the borrower's name, address and date of application are entered below and the card is then filed on a Shannon Letter File, all other entries for the same book being entered in order of application. It will thus be seen that reference to every book bespoken is quick, and presents what may be called a bird's eye view of the names of all the borrowers who have bespoken it.

By the use of this system, the danger of overlooking names, and all kinds of mistakes become almost impossible, as the date of notice is marked after the name of every borrower to whom a postcard has been sent. Furthermore, when indignant borrowers come along who imagine that they are being unjustly treated, a glance at the card is sufficient to pacify them and convince them of their mistake.

The cards can be obtained for a comparatively small outlay, costing about 16s. for 500, these being sufficient to last three or four years. If this is thought to be too large a price to pay, there is no reason why stout paper should not be used in place of cardboard.

It is not necessary if there should happen to be only one or two entries for a book to destroy the card, as the title can be struck out and the card used again two or three times over. After one side is finished the reverse side is used.

The two systems mentioned may be compared to the old ledger method and the present day card charging systems, both as regards application and relative merits.

In conclusion, nothing new or original is claimed for the system, but if this comes under the notice of any librarian or assistant who is encumbered with the old method, the purpose of this paper will be fulfilled.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CLASSES.

The next series of classes will commence on Wednesday, October 7th, and will be held at the London School of Economics, Clare Market, W.C. A special programme of classes in the Library department of the work of the School may be had gratis on application either to Mr. Roberts, the Hon. Sec. of the Education Committee, 44A Southwark Bridge Road, S.E., or to the Director of the School.

In the Michaelmas Term, 1903, Mr. Quinn will deliver a course of ten lectures (commencing October 14th), on "Library

Cataloguing," with practical demonstrations and exercises. The fee for the course will be 10s. Mr. Brown will commence on October 7th a course of twenty lectures on "Library Economy," the first portion of the lectures being devoted to the history and organisation of libraries. The fee for this course of ten lectures will be 10s. In the Lent Term, 1904 (commencing January 13th), Mr. Brown will continue his lectures on "Library Economy" by delivering a course of ten lectures, more particularly devoted to practical library administration. The fee for this course will be 10s. In the same term Mr. Barrett will deliver a course of ten lectures on "Classification," with practical demonstrations and exercises. The fee for this course will be 10s. In the Summer Term, 1904 (commencing April 20th), Mr. Roberts will deliver a course of three or four lectures on "Library Management," dealing with special portions of the subject, further particulars of which will be given later. The fee for this course will be 5s.

For students who intend to take more than one class a special reduction of fees will be made. For the whole of the five courses referred to an inclusive fee of £1 15s. will be charged. For Mr. Brown's course of twenty lectures on "Library Economy" a fee of 17s. 6d. will be charged. For the lectures of Mr. Brown and Mr. Roberts an inclusive fee of £1 will be charged. For Mr. Quinn's and Mr. Barrett's classes an inclusive fee of 17s. 6d. will be charged.

As was the case last year, the Library Association will pay half the fees of any students recommended by a member. Forms for this purpose can be obtained on application to the Hon. Sec. of the Education Committee, who will also supply forms of application for the classes. These latter forms and the fees must be sent to the Director of the London School of Economics.

Professor W. Macneile Dixon, Litt.D., LL.B., the President of the Library Association, will deliver an address inaugurating the session at the London School of Economics, at 5 p.m., on Wednesday, the 7th October, when admission will be free to all students of the School, and to others on presentation of card.

EVER-CIRCULATORS.

The Committee have decided to increase the means of inter-communication between assistants by means of Ever-Circulators. A Circulator will be started for every twelve members agreeing to contribute, and will be entrusted to an editor. The editor will choose a subject for discussion; then the circulator will be

sent through the post from member to member until all have had an opportunity of contributing. Afterwards the original discussion will be circulated again, so that members may have an opportunity of reading the complete set of opinions; but at the same time a second subject will be dealt with. When the Circulator has again circulated, the first discussion will be withdrawn, the second discussion sent round again, together with a new subject for discussion. Thus the Circulator, in its first round, will gather opinions on a single subject, snowball-wise, but in subsequent rounds it will contain a complete set of opinions, and another snowball, a discussion in progress. It is proposed to preserve the Circulators in the Association Library. There is no subscription, but each member must pay postage to the next member of his circle. Membership (for the time being) is limited to seniors. The Committee have started the first Circulator for their own benefit; another is already under way. Members who desire to belong to a Circulator are requested to send a card to the Hon. Editor of this journal.

CARNEGIE LIBRARIES.

Subscriptions are being collected in order to meet the conditions upon which Mr. Carnegie is willing to subscribe £1,000 towards a free library and public hall for Aberaman. To West-on-cum-Parkgate Mr. Carnegie will give £1,200 on condition that a suitable site is provided. Mrs. and Messrs. Russell are giving a site. The Dublin Corporation have accepted Mr. Carnegie's offer of £28,000 for the erection of a free central library, and the matter has been referred to the Libraries Committee to take the necessary steps for the carrying out of the work at the earliest moment. Mr. Carnegie has offered to present a free library to Windsor if the Corporation will give a suitable site. The Malvern U.D.C. have also received a promise of a grant, and the Portsmouth U.D.C. have received an offer of £1,250 for a free library building. The Stamford T. C. have decided to accept Mr. Carnegie's offer of £2,000 towards a free library. The Radcliffe Council have decided to accept Mr. Carnegie's offer of £5,000 for a free library.

A public meeting was held at Ince last week, at which a motion was carried protesting against the action of the D.C. in refusing Mr. Carnegie's offer of £5,000 for a free library. The Yarmouth T.C. have resolved to accept the gift of £7,000 promised by Mr. Carnegie for free library extension. The Swadlincote D.C. have received an offer of £3,500 for a free library from Mr. Carnegie. At Birkdale it has been decided to

build the Carnegie library on the plot of land owned by the Council, and to erect the Weld-Blundell Library as a branch library for the Birkdale Common district, Mr. Weld-Blundell finding another site near Shaftesbury Road and contributing £1,000 to the cost. The Portadown T.C. are purchasing a site for the free library for a sum of £300, to be paid by subscriptions. Mr. Carnegie has increased his grant to Drogheda to £2,250, and has offered £2,000 to the Heavitree U.D.C., £1,500 to Huddersfield B.C. for a branch library at Almondbury, and £7,500 to Bromley. The Oulton Coronation Committee have received an offer of £1,200 for a free library in response to their application for Mr. Carnegie's assistance towards providing a permanent memorial of the Coronation of His Majesty the King.

The Wrexham T.C. are enquiring for a site in connection with Mr. Carnegie's offer of £4,000. The Whitchurch P.C. have secured a site for the proposed free library, for the building of which Mr. Carnegie has made a grant of £2,000.

Harwich has declined to accept Mr. Carnegie's offer of £3,000, and Fareham that of £2,250.

Further donations are:—Tottenham, £10,000; Cheshunt, £3,500; Stoke Newington, increased from £4,000 to £4,450; Cardiff, £5,000.

MARRIAGE OF MR. W. G. CHAMBERS.

We have pleasure in recording the marriage of Mr. W. G. Chambers, for the sixth time Hon. Treasurer of the L.A.A., on the 15th ultimo, at St. Margaret's, Plumstead, to Louisa Catherine, youngest daughter of the late Major W. A. Weston, 3rd K.A.V. We feel sure that all readers will join in wishing Mr. and Mrs. Chambers every happiness and prosperity.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Hackney.—We understand that the Council have accepted Mr. Carnegie's offer of £25,000, and that three libraries are to be erected.

Ilford.—In connection with Mr. Carnegie's offer of £10,000 for the erection of a free public library at Ilford, subject to a rate of 1d. in the £ being levied, a meeting of ratepayers has been held under the auspices of the Ilford and District Householders' and Ratepayers' Protection Association, and after a

long discussion it was decided by a majority of four to advise the Urban District Council not to accept Mr. Carnegie's offer.

The Vicar of Ilford, the Rev. H. W. E. Molony, has written the following letter in reference to Mr. Andrew Carnegie's offer : " Let Ilford have the proud distinction of being a town without a public library. People read too much and think too little. We need public bonfires in which to destroy most of the books which are published rather than public libraries in which to preserve them."

In spite of the foregoing, the Council have accepted Mr. Carnegie's offer, and have asked for a further gift of £5,000 for the erection of another library at Seven Kings. The Act has already been adopted, and the full penny rate will be levied.

" **Liberty Review.**"—We notice an amusing article in the September issue of this smile-provoking publication on " The Value of Free Libraries."

Liverpool.—An illustration of the memorial tablet to record the opening of the Toxteth Branch Library by Mr. Carnegie appears in the September issue of the " Studio." The tablet—a fine piece of workmanship—is of beaten copper and enamels, designed and executed by C. E. Thompson.

Tottenham.—The annual report of the Librarian of the Tottenham Free Libraries shows that the demand for fiction, proportionate to the total number of volumes issued, has been gradually diminishing. During the year following the opening of the Central Library in 1896 the percentage of works of fiction lent was 86·8, whilst during the last twelve months it had fallen to 71·5.

APPOINTMENTS.

*JONES, Mr. G. P., Third Assistant at Whitechapel, Stepney, to be Second Assistant at St. George, Stepney.

*LONEY, Mr. R. H., Junior Assistant at St. George, Stepney, to be Third Assistant at Whitechapel, Stepney.

PARKER, Mr. W. H., of Brasenose College, Oxford, to be Senior Assistant at the Woolwich Public Library.

VALE, Mr. G., to be Junior Assistant at St. George, Stepney.

*Members of the L.A.A.